

What is claimed is:

1. A method for encrypting an original document for distribution to a selected recipient chosen from a plurality of possible recipients, comprising the steps of:
  - 5 encrypting the original document with a unique session key to create an encrypted document;
  - generating a proxy key based on a public key corresponding to the selected recipient; and
  - transforming the encrypted document with the proxy key to create a transformed  
10 document.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting the transformed document to the selected recipient.
- 15 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
  - recovering the unique session key from the transformed document; and
  - decrypting the transformed document with the session key to recover the original document.
- 20 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the recovering step is performed by applying a private key corresponding to the selected recipient.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the encrypting step is performed with a symmetric private-key encryption scheme.  
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6. The method of claim 5, wherein the encryption scheme is based on the ElGamal cryptosystem.
7. The method of claim 5, wherein the encrypted document comprises a first portion  
30 representative of the original document encrypted via the symmetric private-key

encryption scheme using the session key, and a second portion representative of the session key encrypted using an owner's private key.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the original document is distributed to the  
5 selected recipient through at least one additional intermediate grantor by repeating the generating and transforming steps for each additional intermediate grantor.